

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00278 251956Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P 251515Z JUL 77
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1058
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL HALIFAX
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS (BY POUCH)

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0278

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT PGOV CA
SUBJ: LEVESQUE PLAYS LET'S MAKE A DEAL

1. IN A LETTER DATED JULY 21 AND ADDRESSED TO HIS COLLEAGUES
IN CANADA'S NINE OTHER PROVINCES, RENE LEVESQUE OFFERED TO AMEND
QUEBEC'S PROPOSED NEW LANGUAGE LAW TO PERMIT NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS
ALLOWING CANADIANS FROM OTHER PROVINCES TO ATTEND ENGLISH
SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC. HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH AGREEMENTS
COULD BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MONTH'S PRIME MINISTERS CONFERENCE
SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 18-20 AT ST ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK.
LEVESQUE HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO SKIP THE CONFERENCE BUT
INDICATED FRIDAY THAT HE WOULD ATTEND IF THE LANGUAGE-OF-EDUCATION
ISSUE WAS ADDED TO THE AGENDA.

2. THE PM'S LETTER FOLLOWS A NUMBER OF FEELERS PUT OUT
RECENTLY BY BILL 101 GODFATHER CAMILLE LAURIN, MOST SPECIFICALLY
A PROPOSAL LAURIN MADE LAST THURSDAY THAT BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS
COULD BE SET UP SO THAT CHILDREN OF QUEBEC FAMILIES TRANSFERRED
TEMPORARILY TO OTHER PROVINCES MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND
FRENCH SCHOOLS IN THOSE PROVINCES, AND VICE VERSA.
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3. ELABORATING ON THE PM'S PROPOSAL, LAURIN SAID LAST FRIDAY
THAT QUEBEC WOULD PURSUE THE NEGOTIATIONS LIKE THE "RELATIONS
OF A COUNTRY, WHICH QUEBEC ALREADY IS, WITH OTHER COUNTRIES".
QUEBEC ALSO HOPES, HE ADDED, TO NEGOTIATE OTHER BILATERAL
AGREEMENTS IN THE AREAS OF MONETARY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

4. LAURIN WAS LAYING OUT FOR ALL TO APPRECIATE THE QUANDARY IN WHICH THE GPQ'S PROPOSAL PLACES THE OTHER PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. LEVESQUE HAS OFFERED WHAT APPEARS TO BE A NEAT SOLUTION TO A THORNY PROBLEM CAUSED BY BILL 101. BOTH HE AND LAURIN MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THEY VIEWED THEIR PROPOSAL AS A POSSIBLE MODEL FOR OTHER POST-INDEPENDENCE AGREEMENTS, TO BE PROPOSED "IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN EVENTUAL ASSOCIATION". ANY PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONDING FAVORABLY COULD APPEAR TO BE PLAYING THE PQ'S CONSTITUTIONAL GAME (ALTHOUGH FOR THIS "DRY RUN" THE PQ HAS PICKED AN ISSUE, EDUCATION, WHICH IS WHOLLY WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE PROVINCES). IF LEVESQUE IS REBUFFED, HE COULD MAKE POLITICAL HAY IN QUEBEC BY CLAIMING THAT THE OTHER PROVINCES ARE UNWILLING TO DO FOR FRANCOPHONES WHAT THEY WANT QUEBEC TO DO FOR ANGLOPHONES.

5. FOR THE MOMENT, LEVESQUE HAS THE INITIATIVE AND THE BALL IS IN THE COURT OF THE OTHER PROVINCES. AT THIS WRITING ONLY NEW BRUNSWICK'S HATFIELD HAS HEEDED TRUDEAU'S CALL TO REJECT LEVESQUE'S PROPOSAL, WHILE MANITOBA'S SCHREYER AND SASKATCHEWAN'S BLAKENEY HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST. IF OTHERS FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE PRAIRIE PREMIERS, LEVESQUE MAY MAKE HIS TRIP TO ST. ANDREWS AFTER ALL.
MCNAMARA

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